

Remarks by Dr. Ahmed Abdelaziz

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Open Meeting of "##" on "o\$ntering #errorist narratives %&ession "'()* +an),),

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1- At the outset, I would like to thank H.E. Ambassador Moncef Baati, the Permanent Representative of Tunisia and the Chair of the Counter Terrorism Committee for convening this important open meeting of the "##". I would also like to congratulate H.E. for recently assuming the chairmanship of the "##", and to wish Tunisia all success in this regard.

&- I also thank (Michele Conins), the Executive Director of "E*" for her convening statement this morning. We highly appreciate "E*",s vital role and efforts in the implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions in the field of counter terrorism, including resolution 1816 of the year 2008 on countering terrorist narratives.

-- I will focus my presentation on four main elements:

1. The focus on narratives: Here I will try to share some background on resolution 1816 which was adopted during Egypt's presidency of the Security Council in March 2008 concurrent with its chairmanship of the "##".

2. Egypt's current efforts in countering terrorist narratives domestically pursuant to resolution 1816 and the Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives adopted by the "##" in April 2011, which I will refer to simply as the Framework.

0 'RD/ Regional approaches to counterin\$ terrorist narratives Africa, including Northern and Eastern Africa and the 'ahel regions, based on E\$% t,s e) experience and knowledge of terrorist narratives, which could be applicable in such regions.

. !UR# 0 and .' ALL1/ Future prospects, how can we keep the momentum in counterin\$ narratives and further enhance the current collective efforts in this regard.

. 'R&#, Why the focus on narratives4

All forms of terrorism, regardless of socio\$ racial origin, political or religious affiliation, whether left-win\$, right-win\$ or affiliated to a certain religion & share one thing in common & "he% are based on a certain extremist narrative. A !er% self-righteous mostl% narrative !ilif%in\$ the 'other7, thus making it 'justifiable7 to harm them and even deny%in\$ them their rights as human beings, including the right to life.. 'uch narratives are also mostl% based on a self-!ictimization belief.

"terrorist and extremist narratives \$i!e terrorists a lot of moral cover in fulfilling their resumabl% 'sacred7 missions on earth.. usuall% coupled with the belief that it is a mission mandated from (od. It also helps a lot in recruiting !ulnerable targets who are susceptible to such narratives, e)loiting their respective \$ri!ances resulting from political, socio-economic conditions..

+ While terrorist and extremist narratives as such are unacceptable and illegal in many cases, especially when they are conducive to terrorism, they are also 'simply wrong7.. for we do not exist as humans to eliminate one another.. no sound interpretation of any religion can lead to that..

+ While counterterrorism in material terms (namely security procedures) is essential, however, it cannot stop terrorism alone. "There is another much more difficult 'battle of minds' that has to be fought to counter and discredit extremist and terrorist narratives and provide alternative narratives.

Essentially, it has been unfortunate enough to witness first hand and live through terrorism and its narratives.. During the past century, particularly in the 10s and 20s, we have witnessed the emergence of several forms of extremist narratives..

Furthermore, Al-Azhar, Grand Imam El-Idreesi and their respective laboratories are acting vehemently to counter extremist ideologies and narratives propagated by the terrorist groups by refuting the fallacies and discrediting takfiri fatwas; i.e., advice that label others as "infidels" and develop a counter-narrative based on the true essence of Islam, which calls for tolerance and peace between all religions.

In this context, Al-Azhar has contributed to the elaboration of the "Human Brotherhood" document signed in February 2015 in Abu Dhabi between His Eminence Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and His Holiness the Pope, which we believe is an important effort in the realm of counter-narrative.

ESM supports every regional and international effort aimed at countering terrorism and radicalization, while stressing that this phenomenon should be countered through a comprehensive approach. ESM also considers that sports, culture, art, media and women have an important preventive and awareness-raising role to play in this regard, particularly among youth, through encouraging the values of tolerance and renouncing extremism and violence with the aim of protecting them from the unprecedented gross misuse of new communications technology by terrorist organizations.

' Some notes to the # 0 'RD part of my presentation, which is regional approaches to entering terrorist narratives in the northern, Eastern and the Sahel regions of Africa, based on Egypt's experience and knowledge of terrorist narratives in Sahel regions

ESM is a part of the Northern Africa region, so our domestic experience with counter terrorist narrative is by no means applicable to Northern Africa and the

leading scholars and practitioners from various countries to discuss current and future trends in countering violent extremist narratives in East Africa.

Amongst the topics discussed by the workshop was the means by which terrorist groups manipulate the complex political, socio-economic, cultural, and historical circumstances in East African communities through their narratives and messages so as to recruit individuals, mobilize resources, establish and maintain control over communities. The workshop also examined national and regional strategies, action plans and policies in East Africa, identified both opportunities and challenges facing the implementation of these policies, and explored ways to enhance synergies and partnerships among international, regional and national actors to achieve better collaboration in countering extremist narratives. The workshop was very useful in reaching several findings and drawing pertinent recommendations for countering extremist narratives in Eastern Africa.

The UN and the AU part of my presentation is on the future perspective/

Although the UN and the AU framework presented a good noticeable development in enhancing international efforts to counter terrorism

The #airo conference should bring together policy makers from the D5 member states, heads of regional and international organizations and a number of religious, sports and cultural figures, as well as representatives from the private sector such as providers of internet services and social media platforms.

This High-level #onference will aim at exchanging views on related best practices and ways and means to face the current challenges by launching a Broadmap Action Plan to address terrorism from a comprehensive and an integrated perspective, and by strengthening its ideological and financial resources and deconstructing extremist narratives conducive to terrorism by launching tailored regional capacity-building and training programmes in African countries; the #airo process in counter-terrorism related fields in accordance with the national priorities of each country concerned and under the auspices and support of the United Nations.

The upcoming 16th Review of the Global Counterterrorism Strategy; (# " ' <, co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Egypt, can also be a very good opportunity for Member States to further enhance and develop the language on counter narratives, which could fall under pillars one and two of the Strategy, namely addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism and prevention.

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